

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Sunday, 10 April 2022

Stan Wawrinka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. A question concerning Monaco. We see you often in the Monte-Carlo Country Club here. On social networks you post very beautiful photos with you having coffee. What is your connection with the Principality of Monaco?

STAN WAWRINKA: It's a place I like very much. I spend a lot of time here at the club to prepare myself, to practice. I do a lot of my preparations here. The weather is ideal. The conditions are perfect.

I won this tournament in 2014, and it's a pleasure to be back here. It's one of the most beautiful tournaments for the players and also for the crowd.

It's nice to see so many people watching already on the first day. I hope the whole week will be very crowded.

Q. It's been a year. Do you believe it's a miracle that you are here in front of us and you will be playing on the court tomorrow? Is it a miracle?

STAN WAWRINKA: No, not a miracle, I wouldn't say that, but it was very long and difficult, more than a year. I thought I would be only a few weeks out. It lasted a whole year with many moments of doubts. It was extremely long and tough.

I really needed to have the willpower to come back, to have the strength to go through rehab and everything, and I'm very happy to be here now.

Of course I'm far from being as fit as I want to. I need to work a lot physically and tennis-wise too. But this happens with tournaments, with matches, but I also am happy to be at that level right now compared to when I started playing again.

Q. Were you ever afraid you would never be able to play again? Did you want to stop?

STAN WAWRINKA: Of course there were those questions

in my mind. I was afraid things wouldn't happen the way I wanted them to happen, and when you have those difficult times and those doubts, you know you need to go through rehab to be able to live a normal daily life anyway, so you have to do what is needed every day anyway.

So in my mind, one way or the other, I knew I would want to come back. Maybe saying good-bye, having pain would be an option, but for the time being things are going well. I can practice a lot, which is good. I hope I'll be able to do that the whole year.

Q. What progress did you make since Marbella?

STAN WAWRINKA: Well, little by little, it's taking a good shape, but mainly what I need is practice with the best players, practice a lot.

I only started playing again at the end of the month of February, so I don't have a lot of tennis under my belt. I have to go through this. My level is pretty good in practice, but of course I need to find also my game during matches. The puzzle is a bit complicated.

Sometimes you need time before you are able to coordinate all this. So I need to be patient with myself. I need to try to do the right things and practice a lot and stay positive, even if sometimes I feel very frustrated, because I can see what I need to do and I can't do it.

Q. In Marbella, at the beginning of the match, you were maybe rediscovering the game. Do you believe tomorrow you'll be more relaxed? You'll be more in a fight?

STAN WAWRINKA: I'm always in a fight. Even in Marbella I was in a fight. It's difficult to answer your question, because I know I'm hesitating very often and I'm far from being able to do the things I would like to do.

But as I said, I need to play matches and tournaments and go through this. I can play well during practice and win many sets in practice. But we'll see what happens tomorrow. I will fight. I don't know if I'm going to play well or I can't know beforehand. Even when you're totally fit,

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you don't know what is going to happen.

Q. What does "a fair level" mean in practice?

STAN WAWRINKA: The level is good. I don't believe I'm not as good as the other players I'm going to play.

Q. Did you set a deadline for yourself? If you see it's not going well, are you going to stop, or are you going right to the end of it?

STAN WAWRINKA: I set deadlines to know how much time it would take before I feel really good, so I thought by the summer, if I'm not able to be at the level I want to be, I will have to accept that.

But I don't know what I'm going to do. Sometimes players continue playing even if they lose first or second round. I don't know what I'm going to do.

Q. Do you take any opponent that comes?

STAN WAWRINKA: I'm just happy to play that match. I play doubles, I play singles. I have to play points to find my game. I like to have a good rhythm.

So of course this opponent will not help me with that. But what I need to do is concentrate on what I'm doing to try to relax and find my game again.

Q. Are you inspired by other players like Federer and Nadal who were away for a long time and they came back and won tournaments?

STAN WAWRINKA: Well, inspiration, no, because they were always exceptional. They did what other players were not able to do. I admired them. With Novak, they are part of a category that is out of the norm.

Q. Jo is retiring. He just can't continue because of his body. What do you think about that?

STAN WAWRINKA: I know it's tough, just coming out of an injury, and of course there are many parameters here to be taken into account. There's your body, there is your motivation.

He's not the first one who is quitting. There was Berdych, Baghdatis before him. A time comes when you're at the end of your career. He had an incredible career. He was top 5 for many years, he beat all the top players in the world, he had the fans' dream all over the world.

But with what I know, I think he's feeling good with his decision, and I think he will be all right.

Q. When you heard the word "retirement," did you think you should think about it too?

STAN WAWRINKA: I have been thinking about that for many years already. We are lucid about the years, the age we have, the years we had. We know the discipline you need to follow if you want to be at a top level.

So as I said, he's not the first one. There was Berdych and Baghdatis before him. We know we are towards the end of our career. Of course we all need to know how far we want to push.

Q. He chose the place and the time of his "little death." Do you believe it's important to do that, or are you just going to let time decide for you?

STAN WAWRINKA: It's always complicated to make that type of decision. Difficult to know when the time is right.

For him, being able to choose and to finish after the French Open as a French player is incredible. He will be in France in front of his own crowd. It's the dream of any athlete to be able to choose the end of his career.

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